

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 3. In Figure 3, existing structural elements have been identified to clarify their description. The addition of the identifying terms and lead lines is believed not to introduce new matter.

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The present amendment is fully responsive to the final action mailed May 24, 2005. The Official Action objects to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Applicant includes herewith an amendment to Figure 3 and a corresponding amendment to page 4 of the specification. Such amendments are believed not to introduce new matter and to provide the proper antecedent basis in the narrative portion of the specification and the drawing figures for the subject matter of the present claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of such objection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 21 and 22 under 35 USC §112, first paragraph. Applicant refers to the Advisory Action mailed October 11, 2005, which withdraws such rejection.

The Official Action rejects claims 1 and 23 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by KOHMOTO. Applicant has canceled each of the rejected claims, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 1, 6, 23, and 24 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over AZAMI et al. in

view of KOHMOTO. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

As noted above, applicant has canceled claims 1 and 23.

Applicant has amended independent claim 6, from which rejected claim 23 depends directly, to further recite that the flare stopper is disposed between the lens elements so that light that passes through at least one of the plural lens elements falls on the flare stopper. It is evident from the present application as originally filed, including, but not limited to the drawing illustrations such as Figures 5-7, that while some portion of light passing through lens element 22 will pass through the aperture defined by the flare stopper, some light nearer the perimeter of the lens element 22 will fall on, and be blocked by, the flare stopper.

This is clearly not the case with the element 25 of the KOHMOTO device, identified during the prior prosecution as a flare stopper. The nature of the position of the gasket 25, which acts as a light seal between various components of the lens barrel that move with respect to one another, cannot possibly have light falling it that has passed through any of the lens elements themselves.

As the prior art, including the references already of record, fails to teach or suggest the full set of features now recited in amended claim 6, applicant respectfully requests that

the present rejection of such claim and of claim 23 cannot reasonably be maintained.

The Official Action rejects claims 2-5, 8-12, 21 and 25 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of references applied to claims 1 and 6 above, and further in view of the prior art admitted by the applicant. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

Of the rejected claims, those remaining in the application all but claim 25 depend ultimately from amended claim 6. In light of the present amendment to independent claim 6, each of such rejected claims other than claim 25 implicitly recites the relationship of the flare stopper to the lens elements. The addition of the admitted prior art to the disclosure of the KOHMOTO reference fails to overcome the shortcomings of KOHMOTO related to element 25.

As for claim 25, the Official Action takes the position that the AZAMI et al. reference can be considered to teach the originally-recited feature of the flare stopper and one of the lens elements being arranged so that one of the lens elements presses and deforms the flare stopper so that the inner periphery is inclined with respect to the optical axis of the taking lens unit.

The feature of claim 25 reflects an embodiment of the present invention such as that illustrated in Figure 7. One of

the characteristics of the illustrated arrangement of the flare stopper with respect to the abutting lens element is the result that an inner portion of the flare stopper is in contact with the deforming lens element, with a space being present between an outer portion of the flare stopper and the deforming lens. This characteristic, readily illustrated at least in Figure 7, is entirely absent from known prior art, including the AZAMI et al. reference previously offered.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 1, 6-7, 13, and 22 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over KUDO et al. in view of KOHMOTO. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

Of the rejected claims, applicant has canceled claim 1. Applicant has amended independent claim 6 as discussed above, and the remaining rejected claims depend therefrom. As with the previous rejections, the present rejection relies on the KOHMOTO reference for its teachings with respect to a flare stopper, interpreted as element 25 of KOHMOTO. As such reference clearly fails to teach or suggest the full set of features now recited by claim 6 in connection with such flare stopper, applicant respectfully suggests that the present obvious rejection cannot be maintained, and reconsideration and withdrawal of such rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 2-5, 8-11, and 21-24 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over KUDO et al. in view of KOHMOTO as applied to claims 1 and 6, and further in view of the admitted prior art. Of the rejected claims, applicant has canceled claims 2-5 and 23. Each of the remaining rejected claims depends ultimately from amended claim 6. As discussed in detail above, the present amendments to claim 6 are such that the KOHMOTO reference necessarily fails to teach or suggest that for which it is offered, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

In light of the amendments provided above and the arguments offered in support thereof, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional
fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix:

The Appendix includes the following item:

- a Replacement Sheet for Figure 3